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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/643,878	08/20/2003	Kevin T. Foley	2165.0010003	5214

5514 7590 11/29/2007  
FITZPATRICK CELLA HARPER & SCINTO  
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NEW YORK, NY 10112

EXAMINER
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RAMANA, ANURADHA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3733

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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11/29/2007

PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

ET

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No. 10/643,878	Applicant(s) FOLEY ET AL.	
	Examiner Anu Ramana	Art Unit 3733	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 31 October 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11, 27 and 28 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 7-11, 27 and 28 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 5 and 6 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 8/20/03 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
     Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
     Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                       | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                       |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on October 31, 2007 has been entered.

### ***Double Patenting***

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1-4, 7-11 and 27 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 12 of U.S. Patent No. 6,692,503 ('503 herein) in view of Oxland et al. (US 5,676,666).

Claim 12 of '503 discloses all elements of the claimed invention except for a bone plate with slots.

Oxland et al. teach a bone plate having elongated slots (Fig. 2, col. 2, lines 64-67 and col. 3, lines 1-12).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have used the drill guide of claim 12 to insert fasteners through the slots of the Oxland et al. bone plate since it was well known in the art at the time the invention was made to have utilized a drill guide for proper seating of fasteners in the slots of a bone plate.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 28, it is unclear what structure is being claimed by the limitation, "said first end of each slot being closer to an end of said plate than said second end of each slot." It would seem that depending on which end of the plate is being referred to and the location of the slot, a first end of the slot could be either closer or farther from the end of the plate than the second end of the slot. Appropriate correction is required.

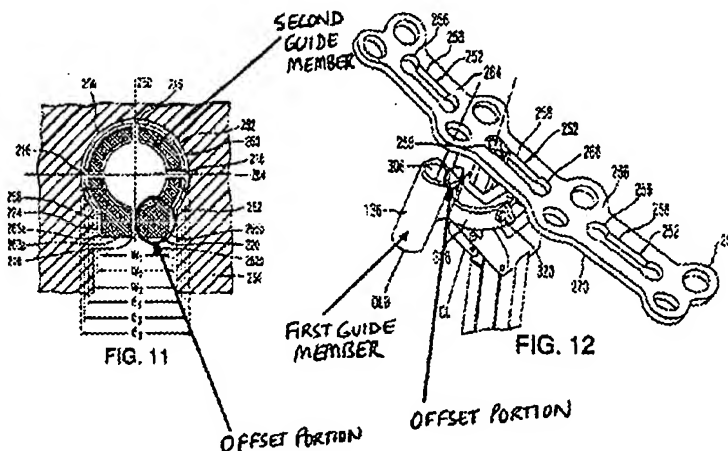
### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-4, 7-11, 27 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brace et al. (US 6,342,057) in view of Oxland et al. (US 5,676,666).

Brace et al. disclose a drill guide assembly for use with a bone plate to correctly seat screws in the bone plate, the assembly including: a first guide member 136 and a second guide member 206 extending from a handle 126; each of the guide members having an offset portion adjacent a distal end of the guide member; each of the guide members having a main body portion of a first width, an intermediate portion having a second width less than the first width, and the slot engaging end having a third end less than the second width; and wherein the guide members are configured and dimensioned to fit bone plate fastener holes having an elliptical shape (Figs. 1-2, 6 and 10-12 and cols. 5, lines 19-67 and cols. 6-14). See marked up Figs. 11 and 12 from Brace et al. below.



Brace et al. disclose all elements of the claimed invention except for a bone plate having fastener holes with an elliptical shape.

Oxland et al. teach a bone plate having elliptically shaped holes disposed on opposing sides of a central axis for stabilizing cervical vertebrae (Fig. 2, col. 2, lines 64-67 and col. 3, lines 1-12).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have utilized the Brace et al. device to position fasteners through elliptically shaped holes of a plate, as taught by Oxland et al., since it was well known in the art to use a plate having elliptically shaped holes to stabilize cervical vertebrae.

Regarding claim 11, the combination of Brace et al. and Oxland et al. clearly disclose an offset. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have provided an offset of 1 mm or more, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233.

### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments submitted under "REMARKS" in the response filed on October 31, 2007 have been considered but are not persuasive for the following reasons.

It is the Examiner's position that the double patenting rejections are proper. Patented claim 12 discloses all elements of the Applicant's invention except for a specific reference to a bone plate with slots. The Examiner used Oxland et al. to demonstrate that a bone plate with slots is very well known in the art.

Regarding the rejections of claims 1-4, 7-11 and 27 under 35 USC 103(a) over Brace et al. (US 6,342,057) in view of Oxland et al. (US 5,676,666), it is

noted that edges 265a and 265b of the offset portions of Brace et al. are configured to contact an end of the slot (see Fig. 12). Notwithstanding this, it is noted that the limitation, "configured to contact said first end of said corresponding slot" only requires the capability of the offset portions to contact the first end of the slot and is not a positive limitation and does not constitute a limitation in any patentable sense.

### ***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 5 and 6 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Anu Ramana whose telephone number is (571) 272-4718. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday between 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on (571) 272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

AR  
November 26, 2007

  
ANURADHA RAMANA  
PRIMARY EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700